

MINUTES for BCIPP Meeting # 6 – USC Annenberg 7/25/03

Commissioners attending:

Geoff Cowan
Philip Muller
Steve Afriat
Jim Rushford
Conway Collis

9:17am – Commissioner Cowan calls the meeting to order. With only 5 Commissioners of 12 attending, the hearing lacked a quorum but the Commission still decided to meet as a committee of the body. Commissioner Cowan explained the days proceedings and introduced Commissioner Philip Muller.

Commissioner Muller spoke about presidential candidate Howard Dean's use of the Internet and identified the use of the Internet as a force in the unfolding recall of the CA governor. He then introduced Bob Stern, President of the Center for Governmental Studies.

9:25am – Mr. Stern's remarks focused on the changes through time that have been witnessed by those following trends in political communications, the advent of the Internet and its impact on the process and then introduced his colleague, Ray Uyemura, project director of CGS's e-disclosure program.

9:35am – Mr. Uyemura proceeded to explain CGS's work to make e-disclosure programs as intra-operable and easy as possible. The chance to create new economies and a better way to track, disperse and present information about political money are exciting and can add a new level of transparency that can both help the image of the business of politics, as well as, provide cost savings and potential revenue generation from the states and local entities that employ new e-disclosure programs.

10:20am – Tracy Westen, Vice-Chairman of CGS, was introduced by Commissioner Cowan and asked to provide his thoughts on the topic of regulating political practices on the Internet. Mr. Westen added to the discussion a philosophical requirement to consider all aspects of the potential impact that any regulation of the Internet might result in.

10:47am – Break

11:08am – Commissioner Cowan reconvened the meeting and introduced Matt Grossman, research director for the Commission. Matt proceeded with a presentation of his research findings, primarily focusing on the results of a polling of each state's election officials and they're handling on Internet political practices.

11:53am – Lunch break

1:02pm – Commissioner Cowan reconvenes the meeting by rereading the mandate of the legislation (SB 879). Commissioner Steve Afriat raises the question of whether or not lobbying is necessarily a required practice to look at and suggests that maybe it be excluded. This question drives the Commission towards a discussion of the philosophical underpinnings of the final report. Ultimately it's agreed that encouraging civic participation and minimizing fraud. This conversation turns into a discussion of privacy rights versus serving the public good and the inherent tension therein.

It was agreed that providing clear and bright lines for practitioners and regulators is a key part of the final report and that perhaps the whole process might be bettered if the FPPC was given the authority to investigate fraud and libel cases.

2:05pm – Having considered the work both on research topics and on a draft of the final report, the Commission turned its focus to finding more dates to continue the discussion. It was proposed that the next two meetings be done via video-conference with a site picked in Sacramento and LA (the USC Sacramento Center and the Annenberg School were offered as possible locations). And the dates of Monday, September 22nd and Monday, November 17th were proposed as the dates, pending approval of more Commissioners.

2:30pm – Meeting adjourned.